

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

PERNICIOUS AMUSEMENTS, THE FOURTH "PLAGUE OF THE CITIES," THE CAUSE OF GREAT EVIL. PLEASURES JUDGED BY MORAL EFFECTS.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., March 15.—The fourth sermon of the series on the Plague of the Cities, was delivered to-day by the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage on Vice-causing Amusements.

The text was II Samuel, ii, 14: "Let the young men now arise and play before us."

There are two armies encamped by the pool of Gibeon. The time hangs heavily on their hands. One army proposes a game of sword fencing. Nothing could be more healthful and innocent. The other army accents the challenge. Twelve men against twelve men, the sport opens. But something went adversely. Perhaps one of the swordsmen got an unlucky clip, or in some way had his ire aroused, and that which opened in sportfulness ended in violence, each one taking his contestant by the hair, and then with the sword thrusting him in the side, so that that which opened in innocent fun ended in the massacre of all the twenty-four sportsmen. Was there ever a better illustration of what was true then, and is now, that that which is innocent may be made destructive.

What of a worldly nature is more important and strengthening and innocent than amusement, and yet what has counted more victims? I have no sympathy with a straightjacket religion. This is a very bright world to me, and I propose to do all I can to make it bright for others. I never could step to a dead march. A book years ago issued says that a Christian man has a right to some amusements; for instance, if he comes home at night weary from his work, and, feeling the need of recreation, puts on his slippers and goes into his garret and walks lively around the floor several times there can be no harm in it.

I believe the church of God has made a tremendous mistake in trying to suppress the sportfulness of youth and drive out from men their love of amusement. If God ever implanted anything in us He implanted this desire. But instead of providing for this demand of our nature the church of God has, for the main part, ignored it. As in a riot, the mayor plants a battery at the end of the street and has it fired off, so that everything is cut down that happens to stand in the range, the good as well as the bad, so there are men in the church who plant their batteries of condemnation and fire indiscriminately. Everything is condemned. But my Bible commands those who use the world without abusing it, and in the natural world God has done everything to please and amuse us. In poetic figure we sometimes speak of natural objects as being in pain but it is a mere fancy. Poets say the clouds weep, but they never yet shed a tear; and that the winds sigh, but they never did have any trouble; and that the storm howls, but it never lost its temper. The world is a rose and the universe a garland.

And I am glad to know that in all our cities there are plenty of places where we may find elevated moral entertainment. But all honest men and good women will agree with me in the statement that one of the worst plagues of these cities is corrupt amusement. Multitudes have gone down under the blasting influence never to rise. If we may judge of what is going on in many of the places of amusement by the Sodom pictures on board fences, and in many of the show windows, there is not a much lower depth of profligacy to reach. At Naples, Italy, they keep such pictures locked up from indiscriminate inspection. Those pictures were exhumed from Pompeii and are not fit for human gaze. If the effrontery of bad places of amusement in hanging out improper advertisements of what they are doing night by night grows worse in the same proportion, in fifty years New York and Brooklyn will beat not only Pompeii, but Sodom.

To help stay the plague now raging, I project certain principles by which you may judge in regard to an amusement or recreation, finding out for yourself whether it is right or whether it is wrong.

I remark, in the first place, that you can judge of the moral character of any amusement by its healthful result or by its hateful reaction. There are people who seem made up of hard facts. They are a combination of multiplication tables and statistics. If you show them an exquisite picture they will begin to discuss the pigment involved in the coloring. If you show them a beautiful rose they will submit it to botanical analysis, which is only a post mortem examination of a flower. They have no rebound in their nature. They never do anything more than smile. There are no great tides of feeling surging up from the depths of their soul, in billow after billow of reverberating laughter. They seem as if nature had built them a contract, and made them a bungling job out of it. But blessed be God, there are people in this world who have bright faces, and whose life is a song, an anthem, a psalm of victory. Even their troubles are like the vines that crawl up the side of a great tower, on the top of which the sunlight sits, and the soft airs of summer hold perpetual carnival. They are the people you like to have come to your house; they are the people I like to have come to my house. If you but touch the hem of their garment you are healed.

There are amusements that send a man next day to his work bloodshot, yawning, stupid, nauseated; and they are wrong kinds of amusement. They are entertainments that give a man disgust with the drudgery of life with tools because they are not swords, with working aprons because they are not robes, with a circle because they are not infuriated bulls of the arena. If any amusement sends you home longing for a life of romance and thrilling adventure, love that takes poison and shoots

itself, moonlight adventures and fair breath escapes, you may depend upon it that you are the sacrificed victim of unsatisfied pleasure. Our recreations are intended to build us up; and if they pull us down as to our moral or as to our physical strength, you may come to the conclusion that they are obnoxious.

There is nothing more d praving than attendance upon amusements that are full of innuendo and low suggestion. The young man enters. At first he sits far back, with his hat on and his coat collar up, fearing that someone there may know him. Several nights pass on. He takes off his hat earlier, and puts his coat collar down. The blush that first came into his cheek when anything indecent was enacted, comes no more to his cheek. Farewell, young man! You have probably started on the long road which ends in consummated destruction. The stars of hope will go out one by one, until you will be left in utter darkness. Hear you not the rush of the maelstrom, in whose outer circle your boat now dances, making merry with the whirling waters? But you are being drawn in, and the gentle motion will become terrific agitation. You cry for help. In vain! You pull at the oar to put back, but the struggle will not avail! You will be tossed, and dashed, and shipwrecked, and swallowed in the whirlpool that has already crushed in its wrath 10,000 hulks.

Still further: Those amusements are wrong which lead you into expenditure beyond your means. Money spent in recreation is not thrown away. It is all folly for us to come from a place of amusement feeling that we have wasted our money and time. You may by it have made an investment worth more than the transaction that yielded you hundreds of thousands of dollars. But how many properties have been riddled by costly amusements.

The first time I ever saw the city—it was the city of Philadelphia—I was a mere lad. I stopped at a hotel, and I remember in the eventide one of these men plied me with his infernal art. He saw I was green. He wanted to show me the sights of the town. He painted the path of sin until it looked like emerald, but I was afraid of him. I showed back from the basilisk—I made up my mind he was a basilisk. I remember how he wheeled his chair round in front of me, and with a concentrated and diabolical effort attempted to destroy my soul, but there were good angels in the air that night. It was no good resolution on my part, but it was the all-encompassing grace of a good God that delivered me. Beware! beware! O, young man. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is death." The table has been coaxed to pay the club. The champagne has cheated the children's wardrobe. The carousing party has burned up the boy's primer. The table cloth in the corner saloon is in debt to the wife's faded dress. Excursions that in a day make a tour around a whole month's wages; ladies whose lifetime business is to go shopping; large bets on horses have their counterparts in uneducated children, bankruptcies that shock the money market and appal the church, and that send drunkenness staggering across the richly figured carpet of the mansion, and dashing into the mirror and drowning out the carol of music with the whooping of bloated sons come home to break their old mother's heart. I saw a beautiful home where the bell rang violently late at night. The son had been off in sinful indulgences. His comrades were bringing him home. They carried him to the door. They rang the bell at 1 o'clock in the morning. Father and mother came down. They were waiting for the wandering son, and then the comrades, as soon as the door was opened, threw the prodigal headlong into the doorway, crying out: "There he is, drunk as a fool. Ha, ha!"

When men go into amusements that they cannot afford they first borrow what they cannot earn and then they steal what they cannot borrow. First they go into embarrassment and then into lying and then into their theft, and when a man gets as far on as that, he does not stop short of the penitentiary. There is not a prison in the land where there are not victims of unsanctified amusement.

Merchant of Brooklyn or New York, is there a disarrangement in your accounts? Is there a leakage in your money drawer? Did not the cash accounts come out right last night? I will tell you. There is a young man in your store wandering off into bad amusements. The salary you give him may meet lawful expenditures, but not the sinful indulgences in which he has entered, and he takes by theft that which you do not give him in lawful salary.

How bright the path of unrestrained amusement opens. The young man says: "Now I am off for a good time. Never mind economy. I'll get money somehow. What a fine road! What a beautiful day for a ride! Crack the whip, and over the turnpike! Come, boys, fill high your glasses. Drink! Long life, health, plenty of rides just like this!" Hard working men hear the clatter of the hoofs and look up and say: "Why, I wonder where those fellows get their money from! We have to toil and drudge. They do nothing." To these gay men life is a thrill and an excitement. They stare at other people and in turn are stared at. The watch chain jingles. The cup foams. The cheeks flush. The eyes flash. The midnight hears their guffaw. They swagger. They jostle decent men off the sidewalk. They take the name of God in vain. They parody the hymn they learned at their mother's knee, and to all pictures of coming disaster they cry out, "Who cares!" and to the counsel of some Christian friend, "Who are you?" Passing along the street some night you hear a shriek in a grog shop, the rattle of the watchman's club, the rush of the police. What is the matter now? O this reckless young man has been killed in a grog shop fight. Carry him home to his mother's house. Parents will come

down and wash his wounds and close his eyes in death. They forgive him all he ever hid, although he cannot in his silence ask it. The prodigal has got home home at last. Mother will go to her little garden and get the sweetest flowers, and twist them into a chaplet for the silent heart of the wayward boy, and push back from the bloated brow the locks that were once her pride. And the air will be rent with the agony. The great dramatist says: "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."

I had a friend at the west—a rare friend. He was one of the first to welcome me to my new home. To fine personal appearance he added a generosity, frankness and ardor of nature that made me love him like a brother. But I saw evil people gathering around him. They came up from the saloons, from the gambling halls. They plied him with a thousand arts. They seized upon his social nature and he could not stand the charm. They drove him on the rocks like a ship full winged, shivering on the breakers. I used to admonish him. I would say, "Now I wish you would quit these bad habits, and become a Christian." "O," he would reply, "I would like to; I would like to; but I have gone so far I don't think there is any way back." In his repentance, he would go home and take his little girl of 8 years, and embrace her convulsively, and cover her with adornments, and strew around her pictures and toys, and everything that could make her happy; and then, as though hounded by an evil spirit, he would go out to the enflaming cup and the house of shame, like a fool to the correction of the stocks. I was summoned to his death bed. I hastened. I entered the room. I found him to my surprise, lying in full every day dress on the top of the couch. I put out my hand. He grasped it excitedly, and said, "Sit down Mr. Talmage, right there." I sat down. He said, "Last night I saw my mother, who has been dead twenty years, and she sat just where you sit now. It was no dream. I was wide awake. There was no delusion in the matter. I saw her just as plainly as I see you. Wife, I wish you would take these strings off of me. There are strings strung all around my body. I wish you would take them off of me." I saw it was delirium. "O," replied his wife, "my dear there is nothing there, there is nothing there." He went on and said, "Just where you sit, Mr. Talmage, my mother sat. She said to me, 'Henry, I do wish you would do better.' I got out of bed, put my arms around her and said, 'Mother, I want to do better. I have been trying to do better. Won't you help me to do better?' You used to help me." No mistake about it, no delusion. I saw her—the cap and the apron and the spectacles, just as she used to look twenty years ago, but I do wish you would take these strings away. They annoy me so. I can hardly talk. Won't you take them away?"

I knelt down and prayed, conscious of the fact that he did not realize what I was saying. I got up. I said: "Good-by; I hope you will be better soon." He said: "Goodby, goodby." That night his soul went to the God who gave it. Arrangements were made for the obsequies. Some said: "Don't bring him in the church; he was too dissolute." "O," I said, "bring him. He was a good friend of mine while he was alive, and I shall stand by him now that he is dead. Bring him to the church."

As I sat in the pulpit and saw his body coming up through the aisle, I felt as if I could weep tears of blood. I told the people that day, "This man had his virtues and a good many of them. But if there is any man in this audience who is without sin, let him cast the first stone at this coffin lid." On one side of the pulpit sat the little child, rosy, sweet faced, as beautiful as any little child that sat at our table this morning, not knowing the full sorrows of an orphan child. Oh, her countenance haunts me to-day, like some sweet face looking up on us through a horrid dream. On the other side of the pulpit were the men who had destroyed him. There they sat, hard-visaged, some of them pale from exhausting disease, some of them flushed until it seemed as if the fires of iniquity flamed through the cheek and cracked the lips. They were the men who had done the work. They were the men who had bound him hand and foot. They had kindled the fires. They had poured the worm-wood and gall into the orphan's cup. Did they weep? Did they sigh repentingly? No. Did they say, "What a pity that such a brave man should be slain?" No, not one bloated hand was lifted to wipe a tear from a bloated cheek. They sat and looked at the coffin like vultures gazing at the carcass of a lamb whose heart they had ripped out. I cried in their ears as plainly as I could, "There is a God and a judgment day." Did they tremble? O no, no. They went back from the house of God, and that night, though their victim lay in Oakwood cemetery, I am told that they blasphemed and they drank and they gambled, and there was not one less customer in all the houses of iniquity. This destroyed man was a Sampson in physical strength, but Delilah sheared him, and the Philistines of evil companionship drew his eyes out and threw him into the prison of evil habits. And in the hour of his death he rose up and took hold of the two pillars of curses of God against drunkenness and uncleanness, and threw himself forward until down upon him and his companions came the thunders of an eternal catastrophe.

I saw a wayward husband standing at the death bed of his Christian wife, and I saw her point to a ring on her finger, and heard her say to her husband, "Do you see that ring?" He replied, "Yes, I see it." "Well," said she, "do you remember who put it there?" "Yes," said he, "I put it there." And all the past seemed to rush upon him. By the memory of that day when, in the presence of men and angels, you promised to be faithful in joy and sorrow, and in sickness and in health; by the memory

of those pleasant hours when you sat together in your new home talking of a bright future; by the cradle and the joyful hours when one life was spared and another given; by that sickbed, when the little one lifted up the hands and called for help, and you knew he must die, and he put one arm around each of your necks and brought you very near together in that dying kiss; by the little grave in Greenwood that you never think of without a rush of tears; by the family Bible, where, amidst stores of heavenly love, is the brief but expressive record of births and deaths; by the neglects of the past, and by the agonies of the future; by a judgment day, when husbands and wives, parents and children, in immortal groups, will stand to be caught up in shining array, or to sink down into darkness; by all that I beg you, give to home your affections.

Ah, my friends, there is an hour coming when our past life will probably pass before us in review. It will be our last hour. If from our death pillow we have to look back and see a life spent in a joyful amusement, there will be a dart that will strike through our soul sharper than the dagger with which Virginus slew his child. The memory of the past will make us quake like Macbeth. The iniquities and rioting through which we have passed will come upon us, weird and skeleton as Meg Merrilies. Death, the old Shylock, will demand, and take, the remaining pound of flesh, and the remaining drop of blood; and upon our last opportunity for repentance, and our last chance for heaven, the curtain will forever drop.

About Marketing Hogs.

The farmer does not view with serene satisfaction the result of feeding hogs for the markets during the past few months. It has not "panned out" to his entire satisfaction, and the prices realized for the time, labor and corn has been altogether unsatisfactory. And yet the feeder is not the only one who has agonized over this problem, for in a late issue of the National Live Stock Reporter, edited by Philip H. Hale, the constant friend of the stockman and the special and faithful advocate of the National stock yards at St. Louis, who discussed the hog market with much earnestness and ingenuity. Mr. Hale says:

"The conviction is forced upon the writer that the low prices of hogs is due as much to the faulty distribution of them on the markets as to any overproduction. The railroads and the shipper and the main packing interests, together with the largest commission trade in the country, are all interested in the haul to Chicago, and a few choice hogs out of the great supplies selling above other markets attracts shipments considerably beyond the capacity of the market to dispose of them, and although other markets may run short of supplies the continued decline in price, dictated by the Chicago market, has an influence on buyers at St. Louis, Kansas City, Omaha, and other jacking centers, and the result that 5-cent hogs sell for 34 cents at all the markets. The large production combined, with the faulty distribution, keeps the prices down. And right now while Illinois farmers are suffering largely by reason of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska and Iowa hogs being run in on their market in large quantities, some of their legislators are busy trying to pass laws so as to induce hog shippers from a wider extent of territory to ship to the Chicago market and reduce prices still further by the concentration. It is not exactly the intention but amounts to the same thing. They are legislating to save a few cents per head on yardage and commissions and, as the Chicago business is the only one that can live at all on reduced rates, the greater concentration would result and with the same numbers of stock in the country prices would go lower. They might save a few cents in charges and lose a few dollars in prices. Men have been known to ship hogs 1,500 to Chicago when they had better markets at home, and for the sake of a few cents difference over home markets which could not afford to make a reduction, the Chicago market would be overstocked again and again. It is to the interest of all stock raisers that the Chicago market shall not be overstocked. The legislature is trying, innocently enough, to enable the packers to steal all the hogs in the country, including the hogs of the farmers of Illinois. It is to the interest of every farmer in Illinois that the Chicago stock yards do not reduce charges below the charges at other yards, and it would be better if the charges were higher. The big packers will get the benefit of any reduction, and the injury will be felt by such markets as this, and by the men who raise the hogs.

"Any man advancing a statement like the above ought to be in a position to sustain it; and the past week furnishes a double example. Twice the Chicago markets were glutted and on both days other important markets were short of supplies. Good judges will sustain the writer in the assertion that with a third of the Chicago hogs distributed between other markets all supplies could have been sold without a decline.

On Monday at Chicago there were on sale 61,429 hogs; at Kansas City, 4,495 hogs; St. Louis, 4,000 hogs. This is not a large supply, and if the shippers tributary to St. Louis, Kansas City and Omaha had not put their hogs on the Chicago market hogs would have been worth 10 cents per hundred higher, and the country would have received 35 cents per head more money, or \$17,750 in one day, which was divided up between the packers and the railroads. Later in the week there was another Chicago glut while the other three markets had to take the decline. Chicago sacrifices the hogs. The second time there was a larger run at other markets, so that between heavy supplies and mismanagement of supplies the shippers suffer. Some day a new generation of shippers will understand these things.—Kansas Farmer.

KANSAS NOTES.

The A. O. U. W. of Lawrence is rich enough to build a hall.

The people's party will support Peter Carroll for mayor of Leavenworth.

There is a rumor that an Emporia lady is to marry a "real live German baron."

A Stanton county farmer has 4,000 bushels or more of wheat in the stack which has not yet been threshed.

Every farm in Mitchell county that was for rent has been taken up and inquiries are daily being made for more.

The McPherson county commissioners have decided that \$10 is enough for the burial of paupers and that is all they will pay.

There are two counties in Kansas each with less than 1,000 population. They are Garfield with 881 and Morton with 724.

The Equal Suffrage society of Salina denies that it has put a candidate for mayor in the field and disclaims any intention of doing so.

Colonel Goss left a fortune estimated at \$100,000, the bulk of which, it is understood, will be inherited by his nephew at Neosho Falls.

There are 700 witness in attendance at the United States court at Wichita, including Indians, negroes, half-breeds, greasers, coyotes, cow-boys, etc.

Says the Lawrence Journal: "The Leavenworth Times is the most liberal paper in Kansas. It offers the mayor's office to some man every morning."

By the passage of the bill providing for the payment of the French spoliation claims an Abilene photographer, J. A. Hansborough, will receive about \$30,000.

A load of straw which brings \$4 at the Lawrence paper mill, produces \$40 worth of paper. The \$36 is the amount paid for labor and the profit to the manufacturer.

The secretary of war has directed the abandonment of the ordnance depot at Fort Leavenworth, and the transfer of the ordnance stores and enlisted men now there to the Rock Island arsenal.

A Reno county man has received a commission to purchase jack rabbits and ship them to England for the purpose of stock up the game preserves of some of the oldest estates in Great Britain.

The present enrollment at the Soldier's Home at Leavenworth is 2,201. During February 45 were admitted, 11 readmitted and one transferred from another home. Eight soldiers died in February.

There is a movement in Garfield county to settle the county seat trouble by starting a town between Eminence and Ravanna, and making it the county seat. Both parties are said to be in favor of this compromise.

A German sugarmaker was looking around over the state last week for a location. He proposes to open with an experiment this year of 6,000 tons and will enlarge as things take shape. The factory will cost \$150,000.

President August Meyer of the Argentine Smelting works has donated a large number of books to the public library of Argentine, Kansas City, Kansas, and has promised to donate \$100 in cash every three months for the same purpose.

Complaint has been filed in a justices courts at Fort Scott against C. C. Glines, pastor of the colored Baptist church of that place charging him with bastardy. The alleged victim is Mary Hunter, a 17-year old colored girl. The minister's friends deny the charge.

Recently a ranchman in Norton county lost twenty two head of high grade Hereford cattle in less than one hour. Upon examination it was found that the stomachs of the animals had turned black. The conclusion arrived at was that death was caused by feeding the cattle corn stalks on which there was sleet. The same result is said to follow grazing on grass while covered with sleet.

During the months of January and February the two milling companies of Salina paid the farmers of Saline county \$104,000 for wheat. As there are several other firms in the town which buy grain it is estimated that the whole amount paid out by all of the millers for wheat was not less than \$200,000. Besides raising wheat the farmers of Saline county are also raising mortgages.

Half Bird, Half Fish.

Count Joachim Pflot, the German African explorer, gives the following account of a mysterious creature seen on the coast of the Ganges delta: "We often saw an animal in the water which we first believed to be a serpent, from its movements, and from the fact that now and then it appeared on the surface for a few seconds. Once, when we shot at it, we were surprised to see it rise out of the water and fly away. Afterward we succeeded in obtaining one of the curious creatures. It was about the size of a large turkey duck, with black plumage, and a metallic luster. On its wing, we noticed a few very light yellow feathers. The neck was very long and thin, and ended in long, pointed beak, at the edge of which were two rows of sharp teeth. At first sight no head is visible, and the neck appeared to end only in a ball. The whole body of the bird is under water while swimming, only the long neck being seen. If it was frightened, it disappeared altogether under the water, and swam rapidly away. Another peculiarity was noted was that when the bird was left the water it lay down on a bank with outstretched wings to get dry. The skin of the creature has an unpleasant oily odor."

"Have you read Blink's book?" "Yes, and it makes me believe that Blink must have a great mind." "Really?" "Yes, if he can understand what he has written he is a greater man than I have ever taken him for."—Life.